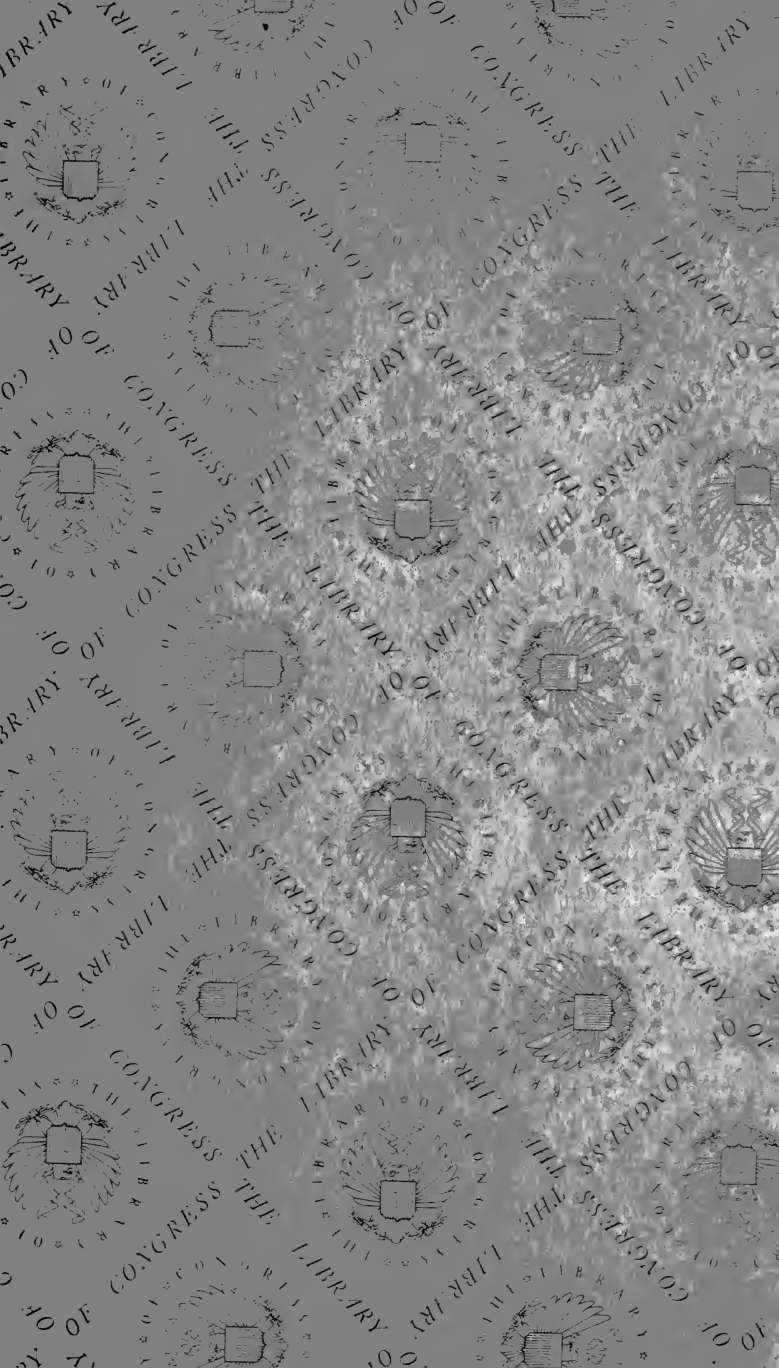


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GUIDE
TO
THE SAVIOUR.



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN the experience of many years in the Sabbath-school, I have often felt the want of a little book to place in the hands of children whose minds have been seriously impressed by the Holy Spirit. Every superintendent, and most teachers, have seen young persons in that state of mind in which they need to be familiarly instructed in the way of life. Many excellent books have been written to guide the sinner to the Saviour, but most of them are designed for readers older than the children in our Sabbath-schools, and they also contain much valuable instruction not essential for the youthful inquirer to receive.

To prepare a little work that a teacher may give to any *serious* child in his class, so simple that the children can readily understand every word in it, sufficiently full and explicit, and yet so brief as to secure an attentive perusal, is not an easy task, and the writer of this treatise is by no means confident that he has succeeded in the attempt. But it has been a delightful employment to throw into this form the instruction which he has often given to the young, and he commends it to the Spirit of grace, with the earnest prayer that it may lead many lambs to the fold of Christ.

COMING TO CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

A child's thoughts of coming to Christ—Going to heaven—The Saviour's willingness to save—The design of this book.

MANY a child has thought, "If I had lived in the days when our Saviour was on the earth, I would have run to his arms to receive his fond embrace."

Those must have been happy children whom he took on his knees, and blessed, as none but Jesus could bless.

When I was a child and read the story of Jesus and his disciples, and how much he loved John, who leaned on his breast at the table, I often

wished that I had been John, to lean my head on his bosom, and feel that he was my best friend. A child who reads and hears of heaven, where the saints and angels dwell in happiness with God, where the songs of praise are going up for ever from the glad voices of the blest, often wishes that he may go there and become an angel among angels, and sing sweet songs of praise for ever and ever.

Wherever the child may live who reads this book, I know that he wishes to go to heaven. If I should come and sit down by your side, and taking you by the hand should say, "Do you wish to go to heaven, and be with Christ when you die?" you would answer, "O yes, sir, I want to go to heaven." And if I should go on to speak of the loveliness of the Saviour, his kindness to the young, his plea-

sure in their company, and his desire to have them come to him and be blest, you would feel your young heart beating quicker, and you would long to have him for your Saviour, and heaven for your eternal home. It would be a strange child, indeed, who does not wish to be saved!

And the Saviour is just as willing to listen to your voice, and have pity upon you, as he was to bless those children at Jerusalem, eighteen hundred years ago, who sung hosannas in the temple. The arms of the Saviour are as wide open to-day, and his heart is as ready to love you to-day, as when those sweetest of all words fell from his heavenly lips, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

I speak of coming to Christ as if i

were almost the same thing as going to heaven, because I would have you feel that there is no other way of going to heaven but by the Lord Jesus Christ, and because heaven itself is not worth enjoying unless he is there. I would have you feel as did a little child who was asked, when he was lying on his dying bed, where he was going?

“To heaven,” said the child.

“And why,” asked one of his friends, “do you wish to go there?”

“Because Christ is there,” he answered.

“But what if Christ should leave heaven?”

“Well,” said the child, “I shall go with him.”

It is heaven to be with Christ. It will be very much like heaven to have Christ for your friend while you are

here on the earth, and the more you love the Saviour, the happier will you be here, and the happier will you be when you come to die. It is to lead you to this Saviour, to show you the way by which you must come to Him, if you would find him and be saved, that I ask you to attend to what I am about to write.

You say that you want to go to heaven, but do you feel that you are prepared to go there? If, this very day, or to-night, God should call you to stand before him in judgment, do you feel that you are ready to meet his face? If he should take you to heaven this moment, are you prepared to begin its songs, with saints and angels, around the throne? Perhaps not. And if you are not ready to go to heaven now, the first thing you should learn is the way to be saved.

You need this more than any thing else, and you will be poor and miserable for ever until you find the salvation of your precious soul.

To show you what you must do to be saved, is the object I have before me in writing these pages, and if you will attend to the instructions you receive while you read, and will pray to God to enable you to understand and to feel the truth which is addressed to you, perhaps this little book will be the means of leading you to Christ! You ought to give your heart to God now, in the morning of life, and if you refuse to hear the calls which are now made to you, and grow up in your sins, your heart will become more and more hardened, and there is great reason to fear that you will perish in your guilt. It would indeed be most

dreadful if you should go down to hell from the Sabbath-school,—the gate of heaven ! Yet many children, some perhaps with whom you have been acquainted, have perished in the midst of these blessings that should have led them to God !



CHAPTER II.

*The dying boy and his mother—The mother's hope
—The Bible—The Sabbath—Secret prayer.*

IN the first place you should *feel* that you are a sinner. You *know* that you have sinned, but you do not feel it.

Once I was sent for to see a sick boy. As soon as I sat down by his bedside to talk with him about his soul, I asked him *if he loved God?* His mother was sitting near, and did not wait for John to answer, but spoke up for him, and said,

“O yes, John was always a good boy.”

Now the mother had never told John any thing about his having a wicked heart; and because he had always been kind to his mother

and pleasant to his play-fellows, she thought he must be good and love God, and that he would surely go to heaven when he died. But as I knew the Bible taught us that we are all children of wrath, that the heart of man, until it is made new, is at enmity with God, and that, unless we are born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, I began to ask John some questions about the state of his heart towards God and towards His law, and it was very easy to see, in a moment, that his heart was full of sin. He soon found that he was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. His eyes were now opened so that he saw his sins in their true light. In other words, he was led to *feel* that he was a sinner in the sight of God, and in danger of death and hell.

Not many days afterwards, his distress on account of his sins became so great that his mother was surprised that her boy, whom she supposed to be quite good, should feel so bad about his sins. It pleased God to make this child sensible of his wickedness, so that for many days and nights he wept aloud, and often cried out to God to have mercy upon him and to forgive his sins; and he frequently said that he deserved to go to hell, he was such a sinner. Yet this boy had been a better boy than many others. He was probably quite as good as you are; but when he came to know his true character, he felt that he was a sinner, and must have a new heart before he was prepared to die.

Perhaps you have always been called a good child by your parents and

friends, and you may not be so bad as many of those who live near you. Your parents may not have had occasion to correct you for doing wrong. And this has led you, and perhaps has led them, to think that you are not very wicked. There are other children who do not fear to break the commandments of God: they will take the name of the Lord in vain: they will play on the Sabbath-day, and tell lies and steal; and because you do none of these things you think that you are not a sinner; and some may think that you would certainly go to heaven if you should die.

Some years ago a very sweet child in my Sabbath-school died very suddenly. She was in her class one Sunday morning, and before the next Sabbath she was laid in her coffin. I called to see her mother, who was a

very good woman. She was greatly distressed at the death of her beloved child. I asked her if she was willing that God should take away the dear girl whom she loved so tenderly. She went on to tell me what comfort she had in her dear Martha, and said:

“Martha was always a very thoughtful girl, and would ask me a great many questions about her soul, and about the future world, and I cannot help thinking that she has gone to heaven.”

I said to her, “Have you any reason to think that Martha had ever been born again?”

“No,” said she, “I do not know of any time when any change took place; but then she always seemed to be a good child,—a very good child,—and I hope she is now in heaven.”

There may be some children whose

hearts are changed when they are very young. But we should remember that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and until it is made new, and our sins pardoned, we are altogether unfit to die.

If your heart had been renewed by the grace of God, you would know it. And it would be well if you would now think of your own feelings, and look at your past conduct, to see if you do not find the evidence that you are still in a state of sin and misery. You will certainly never be made better until you feel that you are a sinner and need to be made holy. Perhaps I can show you that you love those things which you ought to hate, and that you hate many things which you ought to love.

You sometimes read the Bible and other good books; but do you love to

read them? When you sit down to read on the Sabbath, do you choose a book that tells you of Jesus Christ and the way to be saved? Are such good books the pleasantest you can find to read; and do you prefer them to the books that amuse you with their stories and pictures? I have often noticed that children choose their books from the library by seeing if the pictures are attractive, rather than by inquiring if the instruction contained in them will do them good. And when you read the Bible, does it awaken pleasing thoughts in your mind? Does it make you happy to read of the holiness of God, of his displeasure at sin, and his delight in the worship of those who are holy? The Bible is God's word, and you should love it because it makes you acquainted with his will. Is it delight-

ful to know what the will of the Lord is? And do you love to study the word of God that you may learn what he would have you do? If you love your parents, you are glad to know what they wish you to do, and then you are glad to do it; and if your heart is right, you come to the Bible with a true desire to learn what your heavenly Father wishes, and you wish to do as he requires. But most children read the Bible for the sake of its stories, or because they are taught that it is their duty to read it; or because they are required by their parents or teachers to read it, and not on account of the pleasure they find in studying its sacred pages. But if the heart is right with God, there is no book in the world that is so precious as the Bible. To the pious soul it is the happiest employ-

ment to read of God and of heaven, to learn about the Lord Jesus Christ and the way of salvation through his atoning blood. "O, how love I thy law!" said the psalmist, "it is my meditation all the day." "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth."* So sweet are the words of the Lord to all who love him; and if you do not find such pleasure in the Bible, it is because you do not love the Bible nor the great God who gave the Bible to us, that we might know his holy will. You are still in your sins.

How precious is the Sabbath to those who delight to have communion with God. On that holy day we lay aside our cares and the business

* Ps. cxix. 97, 103.

or pleasures that may employ our thoughts and time on the other days of the week, while we give the sacred hours of the Sabbath to the worship and service of God. It is a day of joy and peace to those who love the Lord. But the wicked do not rejoice in the light of the Sabbath. Its duties are not to their taste. Especially is it so with young persons. They, whose hearts are not right in the sight of God, do not rejoice in the return of this holy day. It puts an end, for a little while, to the pleasures of the week. Their sports, in which they take so much delight, must be interrupted, and they must spend the day in pursuits that are far from being such as they love. They may abstain from work and from play, and may sit quietly in the house, or go to the place of public worship,

and attend upon the duties of religion, as if their hearts were really in the service of God; but the retirement of the family, or the worship of the sanctuary, does not give any true pleasure to the unconverted heart.

And you will feel this the more deeply, when you bear in mind that heaven is an everlasting Sabbath, and that those who are there will spend eternity in the service and praise of God. Does it please you to think of being always thus employed?

And if the holiness of heaven does not win your heart, it must be that your heart is not holy. A Sabbath on earth is a weariness to you; and an everlasting Sabbath in heaven you could not endure. It may be said with truth, though you probably will not believe it, that if you should go to heaven with your heart as

unholy as it now is, you would find so little there to please you, and so much to grieve and offend you, that you would desire to leave its sacred courts.

And still another thought I would suggest on this point. We desire to converse with those whom we love. Nothing is more pleasant than to spend an hour in the society of one who is dear to us, to tell him how we feel. And especially, if we are in distress of any kind, we love to go to a friend and tell him our trouble and seek relief. The friend of sinners is the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you love to go to Him with your troubles, to pour out your heart in prayer before him, and to find relief by looking to him for help? *Do you love to pray?* It is very likely that you have formed the habit of saying your prayers, and

it would be strange if a youth in a Sabbath-school did not *daily* attempt to pray to the God who made him, who keeps him alive, and before whom he must soon stand in judgment! I do not ask if you *say* your prayers every night and morning. I take it for granted that you do. But do you find it a source of comfort and pleasure to go away by yourself, in some retired spot, where no eye can see you but God's, and no ear can hear you but His, and there to pray to Him who listens to his children when they cry? *Prayer* is the highest privilege which the good enjoy on earth, and if you do not enjoy prayer, it is because you are not good. This is a truth which ought to make a deep impression on your heart. God is pleased when children pray to him, and if you do not love

to call upon His name, it shows plainly that your heart is not right in his sight.

Now look back upon these questions which I have asked you, and see if they do not lead you to understand the true state of your heart. You do not *love* to study the Bible; you do not *love* the duties of the Sabbath; you do not *love* to pray; and is it not plain that you do not *love* God?

But what is this! A child that does not love God, the best of all beings! The God whom angels worship; whose presence makes heaven a place of happiness, and whose smile is the source of the highest joy! It would be strange indeed if you did not love your parents, who have brought you up, nursed you in sickness, supplied your daily wants, and given you so many good things. But

God is more to you than earthly parents. He has done far more for you than they have done, or can do ; and when he looks down from his throne and beholds you in your sins, despising his love, and refusing to give him your heart, he exclaims,

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me !”*

* Isa. i. 2.



CHAPTER III.

A great sinner—Charles Richardson, a good boy with a wicked heart—Why your sins are so great—The number of your sins—The Saviour rejected—The Spirit grieved—The resolution.

I TRUST you are willing to admit that you are a sinner; that you have broken the laws of God, and are therefore under his wrath and curse. This is true of all men until they are born again. We are all the children of wrath. But you should feel not only that you are a sinner, but that you are a GREAT sinner.

It may be said by some who read this book, "I am not a great sinner. There are many much worse than I am. I never tell lies, and never take the name of God in vain, and never

play on the Sabbath-day, and never quarrel with my companions, and never disobey my parents. I read my Bible and say my prayers and go to the Sunday-school and try to be good, and I do not think that I am a *great* sinner."

Do you love God with all your heart? Think of this, and bear in mind that it is the state of your heart towards God that we are looking at; and if this heart of yours is full of enmity to God, you are a great sinner, and you ought to be willing to see and to feel it.

If you were in the practice of any of those vices which you just now said that you never indulge in, it would not be needful to prove that you are a *great* sinner. But there are some reasons why this very fact keeps you ignorant of your true cha-

racter. We are so much inclined to judge of ourselves and others by outward conduct, that we do not try ourselves by the light of God's holy word, to see in what character we shall appear when we stand before Him who cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence.

Charles Richardson was one of the best boys—perhaps I may say that he was the *best* boy, that I ever knew. I mean that he said and did as little that was wrong as any child with whom I was ever acquainted. At school and at home he was always peaceful, kind and pleasant to all. He was obedient to his parents, and would always try to do what he thought they would wish him to do, whether they had given him any command or not. Although I was a boy with him and played with him every

day, I never heard him make use of a bad word, or a vulgar or wicked expression of any kind, nor did I ever know him to do any thing which would give pain to any one. He seemed to take pleasure in making others happy, and would *give up* in a moment, when others wished to have things done in a different way from that which he had proposed. Of course, every one loved Charles, and it was a common remark among the children, "Charles is always good; he always gives up." But when Charles was about fourteen years old, he was made to feel that he had a wicked heart! Even this *good* boy felt that he was a sinner, a very great sinner, and he cried out in distress of mind, "God be merciful to me a sinner." This was the discovery which he made of his own heart

when the Holy Spirit awakened him to a sense of his condition. So far from being good, he found that he had a very bad heart. He was an enemy of God, and had no heart to love that which was good; and he was distressed with the view which he obtained of himself.

The Bible says that "we must be born again." Until the heart has been renewed by the Holy Spirit, it is offensive to God; and it was this fact which so greatly distressed Charles Richardson. He prayed earnestly to God to forgive his sins, and give him a new heart; and the anguish of his soul on account of his sins was so great, that any one who saw and heard him, would suppose that he must have been a very wicked boy. Now, why was this? Did others know him better than he knew him-

self? No; the fact is, that his heart was full of sin. Although he had been restrained from wandering into many of the evil ways of youth, and had been distinguished for his moral conduct; yet the eye of God can read the heart; and as the heart is, so is the child. And the discovery which this youth made of the state of his heart, is the same which every unconverted child would make of himself, if he should be awakened by the Holy Spirit to a true sense of his sins.

The reason why you do not admit this fact, and feel the force of it, is, that your mind is under the power of sin. Because you love sin, it does not seem to you to be an evil thing. You know not your own self. But the Bible reveals your character, and also shows you the great evil of sin;

and it is in the light of divine truth that you should contemplate yourself, in making preparation to meet God in judgment.

Consider then the greatness and the number of your sins. You have broken the law of God. That law is holy, just and good. It was given to promote your highest happiness, as well as the glory of Him who gave it; and if you had never broken that law, you would have been as happy as the angels, for ever. When you sin against that law you sin against your own soul, and prepare yourself for future misery. Yet this is not the worst feature of your sins. They are committed against God, who is infinitely holy, and who desires his creatures to be holy as he is holy. Not only did He make you, but he also preserves you by his power from

day to day. He is therefore always by you, on your right hand and on your left; and every sin which you commit is known to Him who seeth in secret. If you think that God does not take notice of what you are doing, you forget that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."* You cannot flee from the presence of God. "If I ascend up into heaven," says king David, "Thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."† The holy God is thus always near you; and every time that you do wrong he knows and disapproves it! You sin in the imme-

* Prov. xv. 3.

† Ps. cxxxix. 8—10.

diate presence of a holy God! And the knowledge of God extends to the thoughts and intents of the heart. He knows how you feel towards him. It is wicked for you to hate your brother, even if you do not strike him, or call him by a bad name. Cain was a murderer in his heart before he slew his brother. And the God of heaven knows when you hate any one, though you may not make your hatred known to the world.

And more than this: it is the evil purpose of the heart that is sinful in the sight of a pure and holy God. If you design to break the Sabbath, or do any thing else that is wrong, God regards it as if it were already done! You have sinned against Him by indulging the intent to do that which is offensive to him, and he must be grieved with your wickedness.

That God, whom you offend by your sins, has a right to the love of your heart, and to the service of your life. Every desire of your soul ought to be for Him and his glory; and you should strive every day and every hour to please him by doing that which he requires. As your Creator and preserver,—as your God, he has a perfect right to this service; and it is rebellion against the King of kings,—it is rebellion against the throne of God,—for you to refuse to give him your heart. I do not now say any thing of that great love which has been shown toward you by your Father in heaven. That love increases the guilt of your rebellion, and will aggravate your condemnation if you die in your sins; but God has a right to your heart, and you are bound to love and obey him. It is great

wickedness to cast off the authority of God, and refuse to have him to rule over you, for He made you, and holds you up from falling into hell!

And the greatness of your guilt will be more clearly seen when you consider what privileges you have enjoyed, so that you have no excuse for your sins. It is proper to look at these things, because those who have had little light and few opportunities of learning the will of God, are not expected to do as well as those who have had line upon line and precept upon precept. This truth is clearly taught by the Saviour, when he says, "The servant that knew his master's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes;" that is, he shall be punished with more severity than the one who knew it not.

The child who has been born in

the midst of the light of the gospel, who has had the Bible to read from his early years, and has been to the house of God to hear the preaching of the gospel; who has enjoyed the instructions of Christian parents, or of the Sabbath-school, and has been oftentimes invited to come to Christ, forsaking all his evil ways and turning unto God with all his heart,—such a child has no excuse for living in sin. He knows his duty. He knows what God requires of him, and he deserves to be punished if he refuses to obey his Creator in the days of his youth.

If he finally goes to hell, it will greatly increase the misery of his soul, that while here on earth he enjoyed the Sabbath, and all the means of grace which come with that holy day, to teach him the way to

heaven. He will then feel that his privileges make his sins greater, if, in the enjoyment of them all, he refuses to love Him who has thus supplied him with the means of salvation.

You are this youth! You have had all these privileges, and perhaps, in addition to them, you have the counsels and prayers of pious parents, who have often urged upon you the duty of loving God with all your heart. . If so, how GREAT must be your guilt! How hard must be your heart, that has never yet been moved by the instructions and entreaties, the threatenings and the promises which you have heard! You may be thought to be good by your friends; and you may not be so wicked in your outward conduct as many others around you; but the heart that resists the light and the love which you have

enjoyed, must be very wicked in the sight of a perfectly holy God.

Think also of the *number* of your sins. You cannot count them. You cannot call to mind one of a thousand of your transgressions. But if God should set them in order before your eyes,* the sight would astonish you, if it did not overwhelm you. And it would be very well for you to sit down to a calm and deliberate review of your past life, and attempt to number your sins, of thought and word and deed.

The wicked feelings of your heart are to be numbered. Your *pride*, that no one else but yourself knows of, has often been indulged. You have been *selfish* and ungenerous when no one else knew that such feelings were in

* Ps. l. 21.

your heart. You have felt a secret dislike towards God and his word, and all divine things, when you have not mentioned it to any one. You have had sinful thoughts that I cannot name to you, but which will come to your recollection, when you really try to call your past sins to remembrance.

Your wicked *words* have been many. You have often spoken unkindly to your companions, perhaps to your parents, and every word has been recorded, and you must give account thereof in the day of judgment.* It would indeed be an awful thing if to these were to be added *untruths* that you have told, or profane and filthy words that you have uttered! These will meet you at the last day, and you should reckon them now.

* Matt. xii. 36.

And your sinful *actions*—how great is the sum of them ! Disobedience to parents, neglect of the Bible and the means of grace, the wrongs which you have done to your companions, and a thousand other things which you will recall, are all to be set down in the list of sins, which will swell more and more the longer you dwell upon it.

Every day, every hour, every waking moment of your life past, you have been sinning against God, doing the things you ought not to do, or leaving undone the things you ought to do ; and if the long catalogue of your iniquities were now spread out before heaven and earth, it would fill you with confusion and shame.

Yet I have not named the most aggravated sin of your life, and that which above all others now rests

upon your soul to condemn you. I mean *your refusal to come to Christ!* "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* This great salvation was provided for sinners such as you are, and this Saviour has been offered to you as your Saviour, and you have often been urged to accept him, and be saved by the merits of his blood. But you have never been willing to be saved! You have never accepted the offer of everlasting life which has been so freely made. You have rejected the Saviour and despised his dying love!

The Holy Spirit has come to your heart, and made you sensible of your sins. You feel now that you are a

* John iii. 16.

sinner, that you have often offended God, and incurred his displeasure. But you do not repent of your sins and forsake them : and perhaps you will add to the sin of refusing the Saviour, the sin of grieving the Holy Spirit, thereby causing him to depart from you. The offer of pardon is now repeated, and you are asked to accept of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of your soul. The sins of which you have been guilty in so many years now gone, have risen up to condemn you : and unless they are washed away by the blood of Christ they will finally sink you into eternal wo. But the Saviour waits to be gracious !

“ See Israel’s gentle Shepherd stands,
With all engaging charms ;
Hark ! how he calls the tender lambs,
And folds them in his arms.”

There is no love like that which the Saviour feels towards those for whom he died. He asks you to give him your heart *now*, and great will be your guilt if you should refuse to be his when he thus invites you to make him your friend.

I beseech you not to neglect his call. Think of your many sins, and of the misery they will bring upon you through all eternity, unless they are forgiven; and then behold that Saviour with open arms waiting for you to come to him and be blessed. "Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation."*

Perhaps you are now prepared to understand your state, and the dangers to which you are exposed. If

* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

it be true that you are living in sin, and every hour is adding to the number and the greatness of your sins; if it be true that every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and in that which is to come, you are in danger of perishing under a dreadful load of guilt. If you have broken the law of God, rejected the love of the dear Saviour, and grieved the Holy Spirit who would renew your heart, how great must be your sinfulness, and how deep your condemnation if you perish!

When the Spirit of God awakened Charles Richardson to a sense of his sinfulness and his danger, Charles went to a friend and asked him, "What must I do to be saved?" He saw that the longer he remained in sin, the worse he was becoming, the more unfit for heaven, and the

more fit for hell, and he resolved to seek the salvation of his soul. He sought and found the Saviour. You have read the parable of the prodigal son in the fifteenth chapter of Luke. But it will be well for you to turn to the Bible, and before you proceed any further read that story again.

* * * * *

You perceive that when the young man felt that he was perishing with hunger, in a strange land, while there was enough in his father's house and to spare, he said to himself, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." This was a wise resolution. It was the means of saving his life. He would have starved in that far distant country, if he had not determined to

go back and seek his father's house and his father's forgiveness. And if you have been led by the Holy Spirit to feel that your soul is in danger of death; if you feel that you are a great sinner, that the wrath of God abides upon you, and that you are liable every moment to die in sin and go down to dwell with devouring fire, is it not of the highest importance that you should *now* resolve to seek the Lord with all your heart? Will you not anxiously inquire, "What must I do to be saved?" And as we proceed to answer this inquiry, we will pray that God will enable you to obtain salvation in the only way in which it is offered.



CHAPTER IV.

William's repentance—James Wilson's repentance

—The difference—What is true repentance?

WILLIAM disobeyed his father and was to be punished. His father was a stern, severe man, and when his children offended him, he was in the habit of punishing them in such a way as to cause them to remember it. As William's offence at this time was one that would greatly displease his father, the boy trembled and was greatly afraid when he was called into his presence to be punished. William knew that he was about to suffer, and falling down on his knees, he said that he was very sorry for his fault, and he would never do so again if his father would forgive him only this

time. He shed many tears, and said he had been a wicked boy, and he knew that he deserved to be punished, but he would be good in future, and would never give his father occasion to find fault with him. The father's heart was touched with the child's tears and declarations of sorrow for his wrong; and though he had the rod in his hand, he laid it aside, and said that he would see if William would be a better boy in time to come. As soon as this wicked boy was out of his father's sight, he dried up his tears, laughed about his "father's letting him off so easily," as he said, and very soon was as happy at his play as if nothing had occurred. He cared not at all for his sin. He feared the rod, and was glad that he had escaped without feeling it. This was William's repentance.

Let me tell you of another youth. His name was James Wilson, and his father was a very tender-hearted man, who was always greatly grieved when he had to punish his children. But as he loved his children, he always did punish them when he thought they deserved to be punished. One day James had been led into bad company, and had broken one of his father's commands, and the offence was of such a nature that Mr. Wilson thought it would not be right for him to pass it by without notice. He called James into his chamber and told him that after having thought much of his misconduct, he had determined to chastise him, with the hope of preserving him from such evil again. But Mr. Wilson loved James, and it was more painful to the father to inflict the chastisement than for

the son to receive it. Mr. Wilson wept while he was chastising his son. James looked up and saw that his father was weeping, and his heart was melted at the sight. "Whip me, father," said he, "but don't cry." James was sorry, not because he had to be punished, but because he had grieved his father's heart. And when he thought of the sorrow which his sin had given to one whom he ought to love, and for whose happiness he ought so much to care, he was determined that he would try from that time forward to give him no occasion to grieve on account of the misconduct of his son James. And Mr. Wilson had no reason for punishing him after that. The child was more obedient and correct in all his conduct than he had ever been before. This was James Wilson's repentance.

The difference in the two cases mentioned is very clear. The first was sorry because he had to be punished: the second was sorry because he had done wrong and had grieved his father.

When you hear of repentance, it probably seems to you to be something beyond the comprehension of the mind of one so young as you are, and you do not look upon it as a duty which is now required of you. But you have heard the words of the Saviour, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish;"* and you ought to feel that unless you repent, you will certainly go down to hell. Hence the infinite importance of understanding clearly what repentance is.

We very properly think of it as

* Luke xiii. 3.

implying deep sorrow on account of sin; and if that is sincere, and if it is felt in view of the true nature of sin; it is that godly repentance which is required of the sinner. The two cases mentioned just now will serve to illustrate two kinds of repentance. The first was sorrow in view of punishment; the other was sorrow in view of the nature and effects of sin. If a child is brought up to be punished for a fault, he is sorry that he has been guilty of it; but if he is sorry only because he has been detected and is now to suffer, his sorrow is not sincere: it is not on account of his sin, but on account of the punishment, that he weeps as if his heart were breaking.

Many persons have been known to be greatly distressed in view of sin when they were on a sick or dying

bed. They would weep and pray, and confess that they had been great sinners, and deserved to go to hell; but they were now sorry that they had spent their lives in sin, and if God would only restore them to health, they would never, never sin against Him again! They would make the most solemn promises of reformation if they could be spared a little longer. And God has often taken such persons at their word. He has raised them up from their sick-beds, and restored them to health; and as soon as they have recovered, their vows made in sickness have been forgotten, and they have gone on in sin, worse than ever before. They have even been ashamed to have it known that they were ever alarmed about their souls.

It is very plain that such sinners

had no godly sorrow for sin. They were afraid to die in sin, because they knew they must go to hell; and this alarmed them. They were sorry that they were to be punished through all eternity, but not sorry that they had sinned against the holy God!

It is doubtless true, that every youth who reads the Bible, and attends upon the instructions of the Sabbath-school, is sorry, for the same reason, that he has broken the law of God. He knows that he must perish in hell unless God will forgive his sins, and therefore he repents. "This sorrow is not after a godly sort."* If he feels no other sorrow than this, he certainly will not be saved.

When you are told, (as you very

* 2 Cor. vii. 10.

often are,) that "God is angry with the wicked every day;"* that he will send "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil;"† and that the wicked shall "go away into everlasting punishment;"‡ you feel sorry that you are exposed to such awful judgments; and while you wish that you had never done any thing wicked before, you are ready to promise to be good all the rest of your lives. And so you should feel; but you should feel more than this, or you do not exercise that "godly sorrow" which "worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of."§

The sorrow for sin which you should feel, involves a deep sense of its evil nature as well as of its dread-

* Ps. vii. 11.

† Rom. ii. 8, 9.

‡ Matt. xxv. 46.

§ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

ful consequences. You have seen already that it is committed against a God of infinite holiness and purity, who cannot look upon sin without the deepest abhorrence, and therefore it is most hateful and odious. If God hates it, we should hate it. Because the holy God is offended with sin and loathes it, we should avoid and flee from it. When you look at your sins, and compare your own character with what the law of God requires you to be, you will find reason for *condemning* yourself. This is necessary to true repentance.

When a parent calls a child to account for having done wrong, it is natural for the child to try to justify himself, by saying that he "could not help it," or, he "did not know that it was forbidden." And the worst children are always the best at

framing excuses for their misconduct. But if God summons you to judgment, and is about to punish you as your sins deserve, you will not be able to plead any excuse for your sins. Your own conscience, that now reproves you of sin, assures you that you have done wrong; that you knew the will of God and might have done better, had you not loved sin more than you loved the service of God. You have read the parable of the man who had not on a wedding-garment when the master came in, to the feast, to see the guests. When he was asked why he had not on the proper garment, "He was speechless." And what could you answer if the Judge of all the earth should ask you, why you are not prepared to meet him in peace?

The feeling of self-condemnation is

necessary to repentance. Open the Bible to the fifty-first Psalm, and there behold the emotions of a sinner who is convicted of his guilt, and has no wish to excuse himself, or to make his sins appear less than they really are. Fall down on your knees, with the Bible in your hands, and read that Psalm :

“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.”

God has seen your sins ; he knows all your iniquities, and you should remember that every wicked word you have uttered, and every wicked act you have ever done, has been noticed by Him who seeth in secret ! Confess your sins in the sight of Him before whom they have been committed, and acknowledge (what you cannot deny) that you have no excuse to give for one of a thousand of your transgressions. As you contemplate your sins in the light of God's countenance, you may be led to cry :

“ Show pity, Lord ! O Lord ! forgive,
Let a repenting rebel live !
Are not thy mercies large and free,
May not a sinner trust in thee ?

“ My crimes are great, but can't surpass
The power and glory of thy grace.
Great God ! thy nature hath no bound,
So let thy pardoning love be found.”

Repentance implies sorrow for sin, as committed against God, your Father and Friend. You have often said, "Our Father, who art in heaven," and whenever you use that tender name, you approach the great God as the being who takes care of you with parental love. There is not a child in the most obscure corner of the world, away in Greenland, or in China, or in the islands of the sea, who may not call God "Father." He knows the child, and watches over him, and hears every word he says, and knows all his thoughts. And this Father of all is pleased when children do right, and is grieved when they do wrong. And when you have sinned against God, that kind Father, as you have done all your life past, you must have grieved him a thousand times. He looks down upon you with

pity, and wishes that you would sin no more. He says, by his prophet, "Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate."* And when you feel sorry for sin, you ought to repent, not because the great God will punish you for ever in hell unless you do repent, but because your sins offend that Father whom you ought to love, and who expostulates with you to-day and says, "My son, give me thine heart."†

Think of all that God has done for you! What father or mother was ever so kind to a child as God has been to you? He made you. He preserved you when you were a helpless infant in your mother's arms. He has kept you in life, while others have died in their sins and have gone down

* Jer. xliv. 4.

† Prov. xxiii. 26.
6*

to hell ! When you have been sick, he has restored you to health. He has given you the Bible to tell you of himself, and the heaven which he has prepared for all his true children when they die. And more than this, he has given his dear son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who left his heavenly throne and came down to earth, and lived in poverty and sorrow, and died a cruel death on the cross, that he might redeem poor sinners like you and me from hell ! Remember, that it was for your sins the Saviour hung upon the tree ; and does it not fill you with remorse and shame to think how vile you have been ? Just think of it ! You have sinned against God, the Father, who gave Jesus Christ, the Son, to die for you !

If you knew that your wicked conduct had been the means of throwing

your father upon a bed of sickness, so that it might be said of you that you were bringing his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, would it not grieve your heart? Could any thing distress you more than the thought that you had pierced a parent's heart with many sorrows? But with what deep displeasure must God regard your whole life now gone! How your sins rise up before him to condemn you in his sight, while he pities your misery, but in justice must punish your ingratitude. It is well to look at your sin as thus committed against the kindest Father who has ever sheltered you in the arms of his love. He looks down upon you compassionately, and would rejoice to see you turning from your evil ways, to seek an "injured Father's face," and find peace to your soul. If you will calmly

consider your past offences, you will see that every wicked thought of your mind, every wicked deed of your life, has been a weapon formed against your heavenly Father. What a wicked child you have been! Listen to his tender language when he speaks of the fate of the city which had rejected him. When our Saviour was on the earth, he looked upon the city of Jerusalem, and wept over it, as he saw that it was given up to its sins, and he cried out, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes!"*

Now, instead of trying to justify yourself, or to excuse your sins, you should fall down in the dust, and say

* Luke xix. 42.

with David, in the Psalm which you just now read, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me." Cry with the prodigal in the gospel, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." I do not deserve any thing at thy hand but indignation and wrath. I do not deserve thy mercy; but I do pray that I may be restored to thy favour, and that thou wouldst look upon me in pity, and give me some token that my sins are washed away in the atoning blood of thy Son, Jesus Christ.

This confession you will make with a full heart. It will be no genuine repentance for sin that you feel, unless you are willing to confess and

to pray for forgiveness. You will desire to pour out your heart unto God, and to tell him how vile you have been, and how much you need his pardoning mercy. I can give you the history of a child much younger than you are, which will serve to illustrate the nature of true repentance.

He was only six years old, and was in general a very good boy and behaved well. But boys who are called good, may sometimes do wrong; and this child did wrong, though it was very rare that he was known to disobey his mother, whom he tenderly loved, or to go in the ways of wicked children. One afternoon, after he had been at play, he came into the house, and seemed to be very dull and depressed. His mother asked him if he was ill; but he said he was not. He talked very little, and often sighed.

His mother thought something was the matter with him, but she did not say much to him about it. At bedtime he kissed his mother, bade her good-night, and went to his room. After he had been about an hour in bed, the servant went to his mother and said that she was very uneasy about the little boy, for he was very restless, and she was afraid he was sick. She said that she heard him frequently sobbing, and that he wished his mother to come to him, as he could not go to sleep till he had told her something that made him very unhappy. His mother hastened to his bedside and he put his arms around her neck, burst into tears, and said,—

“Dear mother, forgive me. I have been a very naughty boy to-day! I have told a lie, and I have hid it from you. I was playing a game with my

cousins, and I won the game by a mistake which they did not find out; and I was so much pleased at beating the boys that I did not tell them of the mistake. I have felt very bad ever since, and I am afraid to go to sleep while God is angry with me. What shall I do that he may forgive me?"

"My child," said the mother, "God is always ready to forgive those who believe in Christ, if they are sorry for their sins, and are resolved to sin no more. We cannot hide any thing from God. He knows when we do wrong, and when we desire to do what is right. You should pray to God that he will forgive your sin for the sake of the Saviour who died for sinners; and God will pardon you."

The little boy rose from his bed, and kneeling down, he prayed to his heavenly Father to forgive the sins

of that day and of all his life past; and he promised never to be such a wicked boy again. Then he went to bed again, and was soon fast asleep. If he was sincere in his repentance, he told his cousins the next time he saw them, of his having done wrong; and from that time he never tried to deceive any one again.

This child was led to feel sorry, not because he had any fears that his parents would punish him, but his conscience reproved him of his sin, and he felt that he had offended God. He could not go to sleep till he had reason to hope that God had forgiven him. He was willing to confess his fault; and he did confess it, and he wept bitterly on account of it.

Do you feel sorry for your sins?

CHAPTER V.

Samuel Johnson's remorse—The pains of hell—The loss of heaven—Repentance is no ground of pardon—Is there no way of escape?

IN a moment of temptation, a little boy, named Samuel Johnson, told a lie. He was sorry in an instant that he had done wrong; but he was not so sorry as to be willing to go and confess his sin.

But he could not forget the great wickedness of which he had been guilty; and when he was alone with God that night, the feeling of remorse that came over him was deep and distressing. He described it by saying that he felt as if his blood was on fire, and as if he was burning up. He

could not sleep; he tossed upon his bed through the night, while he thought all the time that the eye of an offended God was fixed upon him, and that he deserved to be punished.

When the little boy arose the next morning, he kneeled down by his bed and tried to pray; but he thought that God was so offended with him, that he would not listen to him. And after saying "Our Father who art in heaven," he rose from his knees and soon joined the family as if his mind were perfectly at rest. He saw that no one noticed his state of mind, and he entered into conversation with the family as usual, and by degrees his feeling of distress wore off, and he became entirely careless about his sin.

The remorse which he felt was not true repentance. It was the effect of

his conscience, reproving him on account of his sin. But it did not humble him. He did not wish to confess his sin, and when he found that it was not discovered by others, he ceased to feel uneasy about it.

The Bible has employed very strong, and sometimes terrible language, to express the sorrow of the souls of those who die in their sins and go down to hell. The pains of hell are often spoken of as eternal burnings. "Who shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"* "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."† "There is wailing and gnashing of teeth."‡ Such language as this is very expressive,

* Isa. xxxiii. 14.

† Mark ix. 44.

‡ Matt. xiii. 42.

and must mean something. It is designed to teach us that those impenitent sinners, who are sent to hell, are suffering the most dreadful torments, and that there is no relief from the pains they suffer. REMORSE is this inextinguishable fire—REMORSE is the worm that never dies! The sinner feels the gnawings of it for ever and ever, and for ever mourns that he was so foolish and so wicked as to put off repentance until it was of no avail. This is the doom—the everlasting doom—of all those who die in their sins. The Bible teaches this truth most clearly, and the wicked, when they feel the stings of a guilty conscience, have a dread foretaste of what will be their portion through all eternity, unless they repent and believe.

Remorse is certainly a fearful pun-

ishment, and one which will certainly come upon the wicked in hell. But besides the anguish they will suffer in their own souls on account of their past sins, there are other and dreadful pains which the wicked will endure. The wrath of God will be poured out on them to the uttermost, and who can describe the portion of those who are thus exposed for ever to the just vengeance of the Almighty? "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup."* The Lord God is terrible in his anger, and his fury burns to the lowest hell. The wicked may hide themselves in the deepest dens of despair, but his hand will bring them out and punish them.

* Ps. xi. 6.

This they deserve, and they will feel that they deserve it. Conscience will be on the side of the righteous God while he lays his rod upon them.

Such is the punishment which the sins of the wicked will draw upon them unless they repent.

It is *eternal* punishment! O, if the mind could fix upon some point, in the distant periods of eternal ages, when the wrath of God would be turned away, when the gnawing of the undying worm would cease, and the fires of hell would go out, there would be some hope to lighten the misery of such deep despair. But if there be a hell, it must be endless in its duration, for sinners do not grow better there. They become worse and worse, adding sin to sin, and provoking more and more the wrath of Him that sitteth on the throne.

I have said in the former part of this volume that you have a desire to go to heaven. And when you think of the mansions that have been prepared for those that love God, and the joy of the inhabitants of that blessed place, you cannot bear to think that you shall be excluded from heaven, and shut up in hell. To be banished for ever from the presence of God and all holy beings—never to meet those pious friends whom you now love with so much tenderness—can you bear the thought? Perhaps you have a pious parent, or a pious parent may have already gone to heaven, leaving a godly example for you to follow, and the thought of meeting your parents in heaven may have often been to you the greatest attraction of that world of joy! For you cannot think of being separated for

ever from those so dear to you. You cannot think of lying down in devouring fire while your friends are rejoicing among the angels in glory ! Nor can you bear the thought of dwelling for ever in the company of devils, and with the wicked who are driven away into outer darkness. You would not desire to listen for ever to their curses and blasphemy, as they vent their rage against the God who made them, whose mercy they have despised, and whose wrath they have provoked. But the remorse of conscience which you now feel is the first fruits of sin, and the long eternity—the for-ever—before you, will be spent in more bitter sorrow, unless you now obtain the pardon of your transgressions, and become reconciled unto God.

It is well to understand clearly

your present condition, your sinfulness and your danger, that the great question may be considered, "Whether there is any hope in your case?" As your heart has not been renewed by the Holy Spirit, you are still in your sins, an enemy of God, under the curse of his holy law, and liable every moment to be doomed to the pains of hell! It would be perfectly right and proper for God to punish you for one sin. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life and in that which is to come. Of how many sins have you been guilty in your life already past? They are all remembered, and you will have to answer for them all in the day of judgment! If you should lie down to sleep this night, and never wake again in this world, where would your soul be? Were you now to stand

in the presence of the great God of heaven and earth, to give an account of the deeds done in the body, what could you answer for the sins which would then rise up against you? You would have nothing to answer. And what can you do now, to escape the wrath and curse of God that must come upon sin? You say that you are sorry you have sinned, and you desire to be forgiven? But why should God forgive you? On what ground do you deserve to be forgiven? What reason can you give why you should not be punished for ever?

Suppose you have offended your father, and he calls you before him to punish you for your disobedience. Does the fact that you are sorry for your sins satisfy him that you do not deserve to be punished? If you promise to do so no more, will he

not say that you still deserve to be punished for the past, and that all that you can do in time to come will make no amends for former transgressions? Such is your present condition. You are a sinner condemned already! The wrath of God abideth on you! The law that you have broken demands that your soul should die! Now what can you do? To whom will you flee for help? You cannot deliver your own soul from the hand of God! You cannot answer for one of a thousand of your transgressions. If you begin to do better in time to come, all your past sins are recorded against you in the book of God's remembrance, and they will be brought at the last day.

If a murderer is convicted of his crime and sentenced to death, it would

not be right to pardon him and set him at liberty merely because he says that he is sorry and will never commit a murder again. The law that forbids murder would be good for nothing, if repentance and promise of amendment were enough to ensure the offender's pardon.

All sinners will feel sorry, sooner or later, that they have broken the law of God. Some will feel sorry while they are here, in this world ; and many will vainly sorrow in hell. If you do not mourn now over sin, the time will certainly arrive when you will feel the bitterness of hopeless grief. Beware lest "thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed," and say, "how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof."*

* Prov. v. 12, 13.

There is sorrow in hell; but that sorrow is of no avail. It would not do to open the gates of hell and release the wicked from its dreadful caverns, and admit them into heaven, because they are sorry that their sins have brought them into that place of torment. Nor would it be right to take you to heaven merely because you repent of sin and promise to be good hereafter.

This brings us to see that you are in a sad and desperate state. You have sinned without excuse, and are now under sentence of death! Unless some way can be found by which God can forgive you, and still be a just and righteous God, there is no help for you. The law must take its course. You must be cut off in your sins, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

If God has provided a way of escape, and has made it so simple and so easy, that even children and youth are able to see and understand it, we ought to make haste to discover it, and walk in it, that we may find the salvation of our precious souls. You will perish unless you find the WAY OF LIFE.



CHAPTER VI.

What must I do?—Believe—Jesus Christ is the only Saviour—He is able and willing to save all who repent and believe the gospel—The sinner believing.

“WHAT must I do to be saved?” This was the great question which a trembling sinner once asked an apostle of God; and the answer was just the same that must be given to every sinner who comes to inquire the way to heaven. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”*

But when the sinner is told that he must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, he asks again, “What is it to believe?” Simple as the language is,

* Acts xvi. 31.

which we employ when speaking on this subject, it is true that almost all children and many persons of mature years, appear to be in doubt as to the meaning of this direction, when they are told to *believe*. The sinner who reads the word of God, has often read such passages as these: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever BELIEVETH in him should not perish but have eternal life."* "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."† "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."‡ These, and many other similar pas-

* John iii. 14, 15.

† John iii. 36.

‡ Mark xvi. 16.

sages of Scripture, make it very plain that believing in Christ is the way to be saved.

When man had sinned, and by his sins had incurred the dreadful penalty of God's violated law, he was pleased to give his Son Jesus Christ, to die for sinners. "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."* "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."†

The first thing which you are to believe, then, is this, that there is no other way of salvation than by Jesus Christ. So long as you think of finding any other plan by which to

* 1 Tim. i. 15.

† Acts iv. 12.

secure the favour of God and the salvation of your soul, you will not rely on the plan that God has made known. It is indeed wonderful that God should devise any plan by which sinners may be pardoned and saved; and it is more wonderful still, that he should devise such a way as this. But if you search the Scriptures or study all other books, you will never find any way to heaven that does not lead you, first, to Jesus Christ. As soon as one of our fallen race feels that he is a sinner, and in danger of being punished in hell for ever, he begins to inquire how he shall escape. He sometimes thinks that if he does many things that are good—such as giving to the poor; or to the cause of Christ, by sending the gospel to the heathen; or building churches—God will be pleased with him, and will take him

to heaven. For the same reason many people, (the Papists, for example,) do penance, as they call it; that is, they undergo hardship and pain; they make long pilgrimages, or go barefoot in the cold; or abstain for a long time from food, thinking that God will accept such sacrifices as an atonement for sin, and therefore will pardon their transgressions. They trust in what *they* do, and not in what Christ has done. So the poor pagans, whose consciences tell them that they have done wrong, offer sacrifices, (sometimes of their own living children,) to appease the wrath of an unknown idol-god. When our Saviour was here on earth, a poor woman came to him who had been diseased for many years, and had spent all her living on many physicians, and was nothing bettered, but

rather grew worse. She came to Christ, and as soon as she touched the hem of his garment she was made well! All other physicians could do her no good; but when she gave up all dependence on them, and just relied on Christ, she was healed. Thus we are taught that there is no other way of being saved than by simple faith in Jesus. So long as we cherish a thought of being able to find any Saviour but Christ, we do not trust in him alone. This point must be settled, and your mind must be at rest upon it, or you will not appreciate the necessity of the atonement which has been made for sin.

In the next place, the Lord Jesus Christ is just the Saviour whom you need. As you have broken the law of God, it is necessary that you should suffer, or that some one, who has not

sinned, should suffer in your place. The Son of God, equal with the Father, and free from all sin, consents to bear our load of guilt,—to suffer the just for the unjust, and to take upon himself the iniquities of us all. This mysterious sacrifice satisfies the demands of the law; and now God can be just, and yet pardon those who believe. If Christ had not died, we must have perished for ever. But since Christ has borne our sins in his own body, you can see plainly how God can have mercy on sinners, for the sake of his Son, who has made this great atonement. He has promised that he will have mercy on those who come to him believing in Jesus Christ, and relying on what he has done, as the sufficient, sole ground of forgiveness and acceptance.

The anxious sinner, overwhelmed with the number and greatness of his sins, and feeling that he most justly deserves to perish; is not willing to believe that the Saviour is able to have compassion on so guilty a soul as his, and to deliver him from going down to the pit. But he does not realize the greatness of the atonement which has been made. The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. Millions of sinners have believed in Him, and, dying in faith, have ascended up to dwell in his presence, for ever to sing his praises. Multitudes, now living, rejoice in him with joy unspeakable. The most guilty sinners have found him just the Saviour they required. He died for the chief of sinners. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by

him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”* He came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. You are a sinner,—a great sinner; and none but an almighty Saviour would be able to save your soul. Such a Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ; and you can plead the very greatness of your guilt to show your need of a free salvation. “O Lord, pardon my iniquity, FOR IT IS GREAT!”

But more than all this, you must believe that Jesus Christ is willing to save. You see the way by which God will have mercy on sinners for the sake of Christ: that he accepts the death of his Son, as an atoning sacrifice, and is therefore *just*, while

* Heb. vii. 25.

he forgives the believer. But you doubt the willingness of God to have compassion on so great a sinner as you are. "Will he save me?" you ask, "me, a miserable, wicked child? I have had the Bible and the Sabbath and pious instruction; I have had the means of grace, and have often been invited to come to Christ, and have rejected the invitation and grieved the Saviour. My sins have been committed against the light of truth, and against the love and mercy of God, and I deserve to suffer in hell; and will the Saviour have pity on me? No, I shall die in my sins, and where the Saviour is I can never come." But have you not heard those sweet words of the gospel, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will

give you rest?"* "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."† And how the Lord speaks by the prophet Isaiah, to encourage the most unbelieving to approach and receive a free salvation: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price."‡ "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."§ To whom are these invitations addressed, if not to you? They are certainly intended for very great sinners, and for those who feel the burden of their

* Matt. xi. 28.

† Isa. lv. 1.

† John vii. 37.

§ Isa. i. 18.

sins; who feel that they are under the curse of God, and deserve to be thrust into hell. If ten thousand worlds, besides this, had sinned, it would not have required any greater atonement than the one which Christ has made, and he is therefore *able* to save. And he has shown his *willingness* to save, by suffering the pains of death to purchase salvation for all those who will believe on him.

And has he made any exception, in the case of any one, when he offers his blood as the price of their pardon? Has he excluded you from his offers of mercy to a perishing world? Has he not said that he is willing to save all who will believe, and is he not sincere in his words? Did he not leave the bosom of the Father, in which he

dwelt, and did he not come down to a world of sin and suffering; endure the cruel mockings and scourgings of his enemies, and every indignity that wicked men could inflict; and finally suffer the shameful and painful death of crucifixion, and all this for the sake of poor sinners; and now, do you hesitate to believe that he is ready to save those for whom he thus suffered? Did he not die for you, and will he not save you if you will trust in him? If your own name had been inserted in the invitations of the gospel, they could scarcely have been made more directly to you than they now are; and it is not possible for language to express more clearly the willingness of the Lord Jesus Christ to have compassion on you. Hear the Saviour saying, "Him that cometh unto me,

I will in no wise cast out.”* To whom is that great and precious promise made, if it is not addressed to you? Listen again to that sweet invitation that is found on the last page of the Bible, “Let him that is athirst come; and WHOSOEVER *will*, let him take the water of life freely.”†

And here I would ask you to take the New Testament and read again the story of the prodigal son. The joy of the father on the return of the wanderer will give you some idea of the joy of the Saviour when prodigal sinners come back to him with confessions of their sins. Read also the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, and think upon each verse as a distinct and gracious call to you, and especially dwell

* John vi. 37.

† Rev. xxii. 17.

upon the fulness and freeness of the invitation and promise contained in the seventh verse of that most blessed message from the infinite God. Read, and may the words sink into your soul!

“ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and *he will* have mercy upon him, and to our God for HE WILL ABUNDANTLY PARDON !”

Could words be more full of hope? This is the call of the great God to you : to the unrighteous and the wicked. It is a pledge that he will have mercy, and will abundantly pardon. There is no room for doubt. There is no danger of being rejected. If you will return unto the Lord, he will have mercy ! Hath he not said

it, and shall he not do it? And will you doubt his willingness to save?

If now you are ready to believe that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of sinners, that he is ABLE and WILLING to save unto the uttermost all those that trust in him, you know what it is to come to Christ. It is to depend on him for the pardon of your sins, and the salvation of your soul. You are to receive this truth in the love of it, that Jesus Christ died for sinners, and has obtained eternal redemption for all them that believe. But remember, that though you believe this with all your heart, you will not deserve to be saved. Your faith will not be your title to eternal life. But God will forgive you for the sake of his son, Jesus Christ, who has

died to atone for your sins. His death is the only ground of pardon for any sinner. Salvation comes from his death, and it is by faith that we become partakers of it. God will forgive those only for Christ's sake, who repent and believe. Can there be any love more wonderful than this? And can there be any plan of salvation more simple? A little child can understand it as clearly as the oldest and wisest man. Faith in Christ is the simple trust of a child in the promise of God, and you have more encouragement to trust in your heavenly Father than in any earthly parent. Can you not be willing to leave your soul in the hands of God, being fully persuaded that he is able and willing to wash away all your sins in the blood of Christ, and

prepare you for his service here, and for the enjoyment of everlasting life in heaven?

“Behold, then, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!”* No other arm than his can save you in this hour of your distress. But fix your mind on Him. See him as he hangs upon the cross, bleeding and dying for poor sinners. Remember that he came down from heaven to die for sinners; that your sins were a part of the load he bore, when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost! And when this infinite sacrifice for sin is in full view before you, believe in its power to make atonement for your sin and to save your soul.

* John i. 29.

Instead of thinking that you will get to heaven by trying to be good all the rest of your life, you must rely on the atonement of Christ as the sole ground of your acceptance with God. If you are saved, it must be for what Christ has done, and not for any thing that you have done, or can do for yourself. This truth ought to be very distinctly kept in view, and very deeply felt, for the whole plan of salvation depends on it.

It is of no avail that you have wept and prayed over your sins, that you have felt sorrow ever so deep or ever so long because you have broken the law of God. Repentance cannot make you better. You are still under the wrath of God. "He that believeth not is condemned already." "He that believeth not the Son, shall

not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”* You may make great promises of future obedience, and may begin to keep the commandments of God, forsaking your evil ways, and walking meekly in the fear of the Lord, but unless you trust simply and entirely in the merits of Christ for salvation, you will surely perish.

“He that believeth not *shall be damned.*” Awful as the declaration is, it brings out, in forcible words, this great fact, that simple faith in Christ is the only ground of the sinner’s hope. “BELIEVE, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED,” said the Apostle to the convicted jailer, and this is all that can be said to you. You may seek

* John iii. 18, 36.

the world through to find some other way of being saved; you may go to your friends, and ask them what you must do; you may search the Scriptures in the hope of finding something more simple than this, and you will learn, after all, that there is no other way to heaven.

And there is no need of any other way. There could not be a more simple scheme than the one which I have attempted to explain to you, and what hinders you now from resting upon it, with all your heart, as the abiding hope of your soul? This is the way in which all have come, who have found peace in believing in Jesus Christ, and if you will trust in the same Saviour, you may, from this moment, be happy in the assurance of sins forgiven and acceptance with

God. You can say with truth, "I have sinned against Heaven and am not worthy to be forgiven. I deserve to be banished from the presence of God, and to have my part in the lake that burneth with fire; but I believe that Christ Jesus died for sinners, and I am willing to trust in Him for the pardon of my sins. Lord, I believe!"

If you feel sincere sorrow for your sins, and are ready to trust in Christ for salvation, the work is done. You may be as sure of acceptance as the penitent child is, who casts himself into his father's arms. This is faith; a trust in the mercy of God, extended to you because of the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

In thus leading your mind to the perception of the truth as it is set

forth in the word of God, I have made less frequent allusion to the work of the Holy Spirit upon your heart, because I wished you to see Christ alone as your Redeemer. But it is the power of the Spirit of God that must lead you to see and to feel that you are a sinner, in danger of death, and liable each moment to be cut off and cast into hell! It is by his power that your eyes are opened to your danger, that you have been arrested in your course of sin, and been led to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" And if now you are brought to embrace the gospel plan of salvation, and to trust in the Saviour of sinners, it is the Holy Spirit that persuades and enables you to embrace Jesus Christ as he is offered to you in the gospel. The Spirit sets

your sins in order before your mind, convinces you of your guilt and your desert of eternal punishment, and urges you to renounce your sins, and to cleave unto the Lord your God. These are the strivings of the Spirit which you feel in your soul; and you ought to be very careful that you resist them not, lest you should cause him to withdraw from you for ever. Conscious that God is thus moving upon your heart, and inclining you to embrace the offers of eternal life, you should fall down on your knees and cry,—

“Here, Lord, am I, a poor, miserable, hell-deserving sinner. I have broken thy laws, and have not obeyed thy counsels, and I deserve to die. If thou shouldst now cut me off and give me my portion with unbelievers

in the world of wo, it would be right; for I am a great sinner, and have no excuse. But, O Lord, I know that thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, has died to make atonement for the sins of men. For his sake thou canst have compassion on the chief of sinners. I do not ask it because of any thing that I have done, or can do, but only for the merits of the blessed Saviour, who gave himself for me.

‘Thou must save and thou alone.

In my hand no price I bring,

Simply to thy cross I cling.’

Take me, O God, and do with me what is for thy glory. Thine I would be,—thine only and for ever. Here at thy feet I would lie, and put my trust in the merits of my Saviour, who died on the cross. In no other way would I be saved.

‘A broken heart, my God ! my King !
Is all the sacrifice I bring :
The God of grace will ne’er despise
A broken heart for sacrifice.

‘My soul lies humbled in the dust,
And owns thy dreadful sentence just ;
Look down, O Lord, with pitying eye,
And save a soul condemned to die.’ ”



CHAPTER VII.

Why you ought to come to Christ

CHRIST is the way, as well as the truth and the life. You have seen that God is willing to have mercy on the chief of sinners; that the Saviour is waiting to be gracious, and that the Holy Spirit, by convincing of sin and awakening desires after salvation, is striving with the sinner to lead him to repent and trust in Christ. If you perish in your sins when the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost would rejoice to save you, it must be your own fault; and your punishment in hell ought to be far greater than the punishment of those who have not had the instructions which have been

given to you. And if you have not yet yielded to the calls of the Saviour, and embraced the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is offered to you in the gospel, there is great reason to fear that you will continue to go on in sin, and become more and more hardened in your iniquity. You may grieve the Holy Spirit so that the serious and anxious thoughts which now disturb your mind will all pass away, and you will be left to perish! I would therefore urge you to an immediate acceptance of Christ as your Saviour. If you will attend to them with prayerful earnestness, I would present some reasons to induce you to come to Christ now.

1. It is easier to come now than it ever will be hereafter. The heart is more tender in childhood and youth,

than it is when the sinner has grown old in sin. Sin will get a stronger hold upon your affections, and you will love it more and hate God more, the older you grow. Perhaps you can remember the time when the truths of the Bible made a deeper impression on your heart than they do now; when you were easily melted and moved by the mere allusion to Jesus and his dying love; when you longed to go to heaven and enjoy the society of saints and angels. When you were only six or seven years old the love of Christ would touch your heart far more than it does now; and as one year after another has passed by, you have become more and more indifferent to the power of divine things. The Holy Spirit has now, perhaps, aroused you to a sense of

your lost condition, and has led you to feel more anxious than you have felt before, about the salvation of your precious soul. But unless you repent and believe NOW, these serious thoughts will soon pass away, and you will go on, unconcerned, in sin. You will be more wicked and careless and thoughtless than you have ever been. The preaching of the gospel, the instructions of the Sabbath-school, the prayers and counsels of pious parents and friends, will have less effect upon you than they have had in years past. Conscience, that monitor in your breast, which reproves you when you do wrong, will be less tender, and you will sin without remorse or shame, though you still know that it is offensive to God, and will expose you to his

eternal displeasure. And so you will go on, adding sin to sin, and treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, until, perhaps, you are suddenly cut down, and summoned to the judgment-seat of Christ.

And besides this, you have much less to distract your mind now than you will have when you become older. A few years hence, and the cares of the world will press heavily upon you. In the morning when you awake, you will think of the business that must be done; and through the day you will be busy, and perplexed, and anxious about the things of the world. And at night you will be tired and disturbed, and no time will be found to consider the things that belong to your everlasting peace. This is one reason why so very few

men of business are ever converted to God. Almost all who are ever brought to Christ come when they are young; before the cares of the world, and the desire for riches have taken possession of their hearts. As soon as men become anxious about their worldly business, they neglect the one thing needful, and forget the interests of their immortal souls.

Or, if you do not plunge into business, you will soon be taken up with the pleasures of the world. See the youth around you, who have grown up in sin. How fond they are of dress and display! How the follies of time have gained their affections; and how little do they act as if they thought that eternity was just before them. They are on the verge of hell, but they are as unconcerned as if no

fiery billows rolled beneath their feet. "Madness is in their heart while they live." It will be a miracle of mercy if God should alarm them in their gay career and bring them to repentance. It is most probable they will press on in sin, pursuing the vanities of the world, putting off repentance till a more convenient season, and at last, in an hour they think not, the summons of death will come, and they will be laid in the grave. Soon—very soon—you will be in the ranks of those who are seeking after the vain pleasures of a wicked world; and even if you should then think of heaven and hell, it would be harder than it is now to break away from sin, and set your affections on things above. Your young companions will point the finger of scorn at you, and try to

make you ashamed of your fears. They will laugh at religion, and tell you it is well enough for the weak and the old, but never was intended for the young; and so they would persuade you to omit any preparation for eternity until the approach of death.

But God says, "Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation." Every thing now is favourable. The Spirit of God has awakened you to a sense of your sins; and the blessed Saviour stands, with open arms, to receive you as a penitent sinner trusting in his atoning blood. If you defer till to-morrow, all your anxiety may be gone: the next day you may be thoughtless about your precious soul, and in a few weeks from this time you may be

more hardened in sin than you have been in your whole life before. It is a solemn moment with you. The eye of God is fixed upon you. He is waiting to receive you as a returning prodigal. There is sympathy felt in heaven for you this moment, and there would be joy among the angels if you should now repent and believe. This is the golden hour for you. Repent now, believe now, accept Christ as your Saviour now.

2. But another reason for immediate decision to be the Lord's, is found in the fact, that if you remain as you now are you will certainly perish. It will require no effort on your part to destroy your own soul. If you refuse to come to Christ, you will pass along down the stream of time, and by and by, (suddenly, per-

haps,) you will plunge into hell ! You may never become an abandoned sinner, a liar or profane swearer, or a thief ; you may always be moral in your deportment, and regular in your attendance upon the means of grace, and like the young man of whom you read,* you may keep all the commandments from your youth up. But if you never loved God with all your heart and soul, if you have never repented of your sins and believed in Christ, you are the enemy of God, and if you die as you are, you must perish ! Where Christ is, you can never come ! Remain as you are, and your destruction is as sure as the coming of death. Millions once thought as you now think, that at

* Matt. xix. 20.

some future day they would repent and believe, and sitting still, they waited for a better time to come. It never came. Months and years swiftly passed away; the cares of the world pressed heavily on the heart; youth, manhood, and old age, each in its turn, came on; and at last stern death seized upon them, and bore them away to the bar of God. They were resting just where you now are, thinking that they would repent, but perishing in their sins. Many in hell are vainly mourning over their folly in neglecting the one single moment which might have saved them from that awful doom!

3. If such a thing were possible as that you should come to Christ, in the way of his appointment, and he should refuse to accept you and save you, you would be in no worse con-

dition than you are in now. You can but perish.

There were four men at the gate of Samaria, who were afflicted with the leprosy. The Syrian army had encamped around the city, and these men were debating whether to go into the city, where the famine was raging, or to throw themselves into the camp of the enemy where they might be killed. And they said, "Why sit we here until we die. If we say we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore, come, and let us fall into the hands of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die."*

* 2 Kings vii. 3.

In like manner did the youthful Esther reason when she wished to make a request of a tyrant. If she found favour in his eyes, her request would be heard, but if not, the worst he could do would be to put her to death. But she said, "If I perish, I perish," and ventured in. She was heard, and saved herself and her nation.

If you should now resolve to forsake your sins, and fall down in the dust at the feet of Christ, and he should turn away from you, and leave you to lie there and perish, you could not be more miserable now or hereafter, than you will be if you die in your present guilt. Nay, it may be far better. You are now in arms against God, and when he comes to take vengeance on his enemies, it may

be better for you to be found with your weapons in the dust, and yourself prostrate at the foot of the cross. If your suit should be denied, and you should be driven away from the Saviour, and cast out into everlasting darkness, you will feel that you had done your duty: that you had sought the Saviour: had renounced your sins: had trusted in the great atonement, and had perished because the Lord would not have mercy upon you when you lay at his feet! One of the bitterest pangs of the future state of the impenitent will be the thought that they might have gone to heaven if they would; but if you come to Christ and he refuses to accept you, this sorrow will not be yours. You may then feel that you did not reject Christ: he rejected you. You did not perish because you

would, but because you must! I say, therefore, that it will be far better to perish at the foot of the cross than anywhere else.

4. But you may be assured that no one ever did perish there. We have read the dying confessions of many sinners, but we never heard of one who professed to have repented of sin, and was refused forgiveness. Many came to Jesus when he was here on the earth, but no one was ever rejected. The records of the world do not furnish one instance in which a repenting sinner was denied a pardon, who sought it as the gospel requires! But very great sinners have come to Christ and have been accepted. Peter denied his Lord, but was forgiven. The dying thief was forgiven. Saul of Tarsus was a persecutor of the church, and yet he

was forgiven. In the books which you have read, you have doubtless found instances (like those of Newton, Gardiner, Bunyan and others) of most notorious and profligate sinners who have believed in Christ and have immediately rejoiced in the assurance of pardon. Search the world over, search through the dark caverns of hell, and you cannot find one who will even pretend that he earnestly sought the Saviour and was rejected by Him.

“In the world of endless ruin,
It shall never, Lord, be said,
‘Here’s a soul that perished, suing
For the Saviour’s proffered aid.’”

5. And I urge you to come to Christ now, because you may not have another day of grace. Life is very uncertain. In an hour when

you have no thought of the approach of death, the hand of sickness may be laid upon you, and you may be stretched upon a dying bed. The time of sickness is not the time in which to make ready for death. If your reason is not taken away, pain will unfit you to fix your mind on the great subject of your soul's salvation. But you may not have even the time of sickness in which to prepare for death. You may be cut down in a moment, by some sudden stroke, as others have been before you, and hurried, without a moment's warning, into the presence of your Judge! There is nothing so uncertain as life. We walk on the verge of the grave. We are like soldiers in a deadly battle. One drops on our right hand, and another on our left; and

how soon it may be our turn, we know not. Youth is no security. The young die, and you may die. This may be the last day that you are to have on the earth. Before another sun rises or sets you may be in the eternal world. Many now living will never see another sun-rise; and you are as liable to this sudden summons as others. Could you answer to God for the deeds of your past life, short as it may have been? No! The great work for which you are placed in this world—the preparation for eternity—is yet to be done, and if life closes now, and eternity begins, you are without hope.

Now review the reasons I have urged to induce you to submit to Christ. It will be easier to come now than at any future time; if you stay

where you now are you will certainly perish. If you come to Christ you can but perish; and no one ever did perish who came to Christ to be saved. If you do not come now, there is no security for your life another day. To-morrow, it may be too late.

If you are wise, you will instantly cast yourself upon the mediation of Christ. You see that you are lost and ruined by sin; you can do nothing to make atonement for your sins; if God does not have mercy on you for the sake of Christ, you will lose your immortal soul; but if you will repent and believe now, the Lord will have compassion upon you and save you. Your faith will not save you; your repentance will not save you; but God will pardon you on

account of the death of Christ, if you now come, penitent and believing, and put your trust in the Saviour.



CHAPTER VIII.

Edward Reed—Ellen Gordon—Joseph Richardson
—*Conclusion.*

BEFORE I part with the reader, I will mention a few cases of young persons whom I have known, and who have been awakened, as you now are, to see their danger, and to feel their need of a Saviour.

Edward Reed was about fourteen years of age when he was led to feel that he was a great sinner in the sight of God. He had been a wild boy, and was now away from home, when he was convicted by the Spirit of God, and cried out in anguish of soul, "What must I do to be saved?" For many days he was in such distress of

mind that he could scarcely eat or sleep, and he prayed, often and earnestly, that God would have mercy upon him, and save him from going down to hell. He felt that he deserved to be punished, and if God should cut him off in his sins, and send him away into eternal darkness, he knew that it would be perfectly right.

The anxiety which he felt for his soul was noticed by pious friends, and they talked with him, and tried to show him the way to the Lord Jesus Christ, who was able and willing to save. They prayed much with him, and he read his Bible and other good books; and the more he read and prayed, the better he thought he was growing. Because he was told that he must read and pray, he thought these prayers and this read-

ing would make him good, and that God would be pleased to see him on his knees, and in tears.

In a few days Edward felt less concerned about his soul than he had done. He thought that God had forgiven him, as he felt so much better; and instead of being cast down and distressed, as he had been but a short time before, he was now quite happy in the hope that he had found the Saviour. He went about and told his young friends that he was now on the Lord's side, and that he should never go in the ways of the wicked any more. But the hope of Edward Reed was all vain. He did not rely on Christ for salvation. He thought of his tears, and his prayers, and promises, and did not look to God to forgive his sins for the sake of the

atonement which Jesus Christ had made. It was but a short time that he enjoyed any hope. He lost not only his anxiety about his soul, but his serious feelings soon passed away, and he was as careless and unconcerned about his soul as before he was awakened to a sense of his sins. He was soon worse than he ever had been; for now he seemed to be ashamed to be thought serious, and he would make light of religion, and laugh at pious people, and it was plainly to be seen that he had become hardened in impenitence. This youth had grieved the Spirit of God, and he was left to fall into sin, and to bring shame upon himself. I knew him many years after this, and he never was again awakened by the Holy Spirit. He went on in sin,

growing worse and worse, and perhaps before this time he has gone to give up his account to God! He deceived his own soul, and this sad mistake may have been his everlasting ruin.

Ellen Gordon was a member of a Sabbath-school in the little village of M——, in the State of New York. At the age of twelve she was brought by the Spirit of God, and under the instructions of a pious teacher, to feel the evil of sin, and the plague of her own heart. Few would have thought that Ellen could be very much distressed on account of sin, so good did she appear to all who knew her. But when the Lord impressed this child with a sense of her sinfulness in his sight, she was led to see how vile the heart is

when judged by the holy law of Heaven, and she felt that she must have a new heart, or she could not see God in peace. But Ellen was proud. Her friends never suspected it, but she had a proud heart, and she determined to conceal her feelings. She would not tell her teacher, nor even her own mother, that she was anxious about her soul, and so she put on a cheerful face, and tried to laugh, as if she felt as happy as the rest.

There was to be a party of young friends at the house of one of her companions, and when Ellen was invited, her first thought was that she would not go. She would stay at home and read her Bible and pray. This was a good resolution, for she thought the sport in which she would indulge, might drive away her serious

thoughts, and she knew that she ought to cherish those feelings if she would make her peace with God.

“And are *you* going to the party this afternoon, Ellen?” said a light-hearted girl to Ellen Gordon, in the morning.

She thought for a moment what to say. If she said “No,” what reason could she give for staying away? She was too proud to say, “I am concerned about my precious soul, and I must stay at home to pray.” It would humble her too much to say that. It would still be worse to make up an excuse; and so Ellen told her that she was going. This decided the point, and this inquiring sinner was a few hours afterwards among that gay company, joining in their mirth and folly, as light and appa-

rently as happy as any of them. Poor girl! She took cold that afternoon, and was sick at night. But that was not the greatest evil of that visit: in the midst of the pleasures of that joyous circle of children and youth, Ellen Gordon lost all sense of sin and danger. The fears of hell that had distressed her heart were all driven away, and long before the party broke up, she was as happy as she seemed to be, thoughtless of death and sin, of heaven and hell. But she took a severe cold, as I said. It settled on her lungs, and in a few short days she was in the grave!

Poor Ellen Gordon! What a shock it gave to the Sabbath-school, when they were told that she was dying! Her teacher visited her, and towards the close of her sickness

Ellen told her of her recent seriousness, and how it all passed away when she went to the party; and now she was dying, with no concern about the future! God seemed to have given her up to hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, and thus she died! O, what an end was that! How many children and youth are thus cut off in the midst of their days, and hurried away to the judgment-seat of Christ!

These are solemn facts, and they are written here to show the danger of trifling with serious feelings. If you have the least desire to find the pardon of your sins and an interest in the Saviour, you should cherish these desires. You should devote your time and mind to it as the first concern, the most important business that

ever engaged the attention of the young. Perhaps there are some near you who will laugh at you, and make sport of your seriousness; and what if they do? Will you lose heaven and go to hell rather than be laughed at?

Joseph Richardson was one of a large family of brothers and sisters; none of whom were religious. Worse than this, they were all despisers of religion, and some of them were opposers of the gospel. But Joseph was convinced by the Holy Spirit that he had a wicked heart that must be renewed, or he should lose his soul. His brothers and sisters soon discovered that he was in distress of mind, and when they charged him with being serious, he did not deny it, but plainly told them he thought it

high time that they were all serious, if they did not wish to perish in sin. At this they burst into a laugh, and asked him if he was going to turn priest? He replied that he had no thoughts of that, but he meant to turn from his sins, and turn to God, and he wished they would do the same. He begged them, however, if they would not join him in seeking Christ, to let him alone, as his mind was made up to seek the Lord till he found him.

For this they only laughed at him the more. They would watch him; and when he went away to pray, they would follow him, and make all manner of noises to disturb him; and thus they tried to provoke him and turn him from his purpose. But it was all in vain. His mind was made

up. It was a fixed purpose of heart with him to "strive to enter in at the strait gate." He took his Bible and read those portions of it which give encouragement to sinners to come to the Saviour. He went to his Sabbath-school teacher, and sought counsel of him; and then he went to the minister's study, and asked him "what he must do to be saved."

Joseph continued for many days, and even weeks, to seek forgiveness for his sins. He was in deep anguish; for he felt that his whole life had been spent in sin, and that he deserved nothing but to suffer for it. He could not sleep at night, he was so fearful that he should die before morning, and wake up in hell! Again he went to the minister and begged him to show him the way to Christ. Nothing

was more pleasant than to have youth coming to him with such inquiries; and he asked Joseph to tell him just how he felt, and then he gave him such directions as he thought were suited to his case. The conversation was something like this:—

Minister. Do you feel that you are justly condemned to eternal death?

Joseph. Yes, sir. I have been so great a sinner, that I know it would be right for God to send me to hell: but I want to be saved.

Minister. Do you feel sorry that you have offended God, or are you merely afraid that you are going to be punished?

Joseph. I have all along been very much afraid that I was going to hell, and I know I deserve to be sent

to that dreadful place ; but now I feel that I am a very wicked sinner. I have grieved my heavenly Father, and I am sorry that I have offended the Saviour, who has died on the cross for me.

Minister. You know that the Saviour died for poor sinners, and he is as willing to have compassion on you, as on any sinner in the world. If you are truly penitent on account of your sins, you may now trust in Jesus Christ, and rely on Him as able and willing to have mercy on you. ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.’ Your prayers will not make you any better ; nor your tears. If you are saved, it will be because God is pleased to have mercy on you for the sake of Christ, who has died for you. That

is the plan of salvation; and if you are willing to be saved in that way, you need not perish. If you had offended your father, and he had promised to forgive you when you should repent, would you not believe him? And will you not believe that God is willing to do for you what he has promised to do? The Saviour has said, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' And then the precious promise given in another part of the word of God, is intended for just such sinners as you are. 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.' These are the blessed invitations of the gospel, and they are to encourage you now to put your trust in the Saviour, and rely on him for the salvation of your soul.

The minister felt so deep an interest in the case of this young inquirer, that he put into his hand a narrative of a youth* who was brought to Christ, and asked him to read it with attention, and with prayer. Joseph took it home with him, and found that it was the case of a youth who had been awakened very much as he had been, and his feelings were very much like his own. It illustrated, in the simplest manner, the nature of faith, and when Joseph saw that he must rely on Christ only for

* Among the books answering to this description, or suitable to a person in a like state of mind, are the following, all published by the American Sunday-school Union: The Way of Life; The Great Change; Life in Earnest; The Useful Christian; The Holy War; First Principles of Religion; Sister Mary's Stories; Hadassah, &c.

salvation, and not trust in any thing that he had done himself, he was enabled to feel that Jesus Christ was just the Saviour that he needed, and he trusted in him for pardon.

Then he found perfect peace to his soul in the humble hope that the Lord Jesus had accepted him as his child, and he at once devoted himself to the service of God. His heart was filled with love to the Saviour, and to his people, and he determined to live for Him, and if it were necessary he felt that he could die for Him—so precious did Christ appear.

A few months afterwards he made a public profession of religion, and he is now actively engaged in the service of his Lord and master. He has lived many years in the enjoyment of religion, and the longer he

lives the more delightful does the service of his Redeemer become.

And now I would leave these instructions with you, my young friend, praying that God will bring you to repentance, and to faith in the precious Saviour. You know that you are a sinner and deserve to suffer the sinner's doom, and that unless you do repent and turn to God you will certainly perish. You know what it is to repent and believe, and you can understand what God requires of you now, as well as you will understand it when you come to be older. It will never be so easy for you to come to Christ as it is now, and you are urged by all the motives that can influence the human heart, to attend immediately to the concerns of your soul.

If you have now been awakened to think seriously of eternal things, and to feel that you are a sinner in the sight of a holy God, your situation is most critical and dangerous. The Holy Spirit is now working in you to convince you of sin and to change your heart. And if you do not yield to the call that is now made, the Spirit may be withdrawn, and you may be left to become entirely indifferent. The preaching of the gospel may have no more effect upon your heart: the instructions of the Sabbath-school may never interest you again. You may not read the Bible with any desire to know and feel its truths. You will not pray. Weeks and months and years may pass, and you will have no wish to find an interest in the atoning blood of the Re-

deemer. You may be left to perish without ever once being awakened again to the things that belong to your everlasting peace. The Holy Spirit may not return to convince you of sin, and if the Spirit leaves you to visit your heart no more, you are lost ! for ever lost !

I beg of you not to give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, until you find peace with God. Remember that God is angry with the wicked every day, that he looks down upon you with displeasure every moment that you live in sin, and if you die as you now are, you can never, never see God !

Now you are in life and health, but before another day has gone by, you may be in the world of wo ! Go, then, at once, and fall down on your knees

before God, in some secret place, and confess all your sins. Believe that Jesus Christ is willing to save even the chief of sinners, and in his atoning blood you shall find perfect peace and everlasting life.

Seize the kind promise while it waits ;
And march to Zion's heavenly gates ;
Believe, and take the promised rest !
Obey, and be for ever blest !



THE DOOMED MAN.

There is a time, we know not when,
A point, we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men
To glory or despair.

There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path ;
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and his wrath.

To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth ;
It does not quench the beaming eye,
Or pale the glow of health.

The conscience may be still at ease,
The spirits light and gay ;
That which is pleasing still may please,
And care be thrust away.

156 GUIDE TO THE SAVIOUR.

But on that forehead God has set,
Indelibly, a mark,
Unseen by man, for man as yet
Is blind and in the dark.

And yet the doomed man's path below,
Like Eden, may have bloomed ;
He did not, does not, will not know
Or feel that he is doomed.

He knows, he feels, that all is well,
And every fear is calmed :
He lives, he dies, he wakes in hell,
Not only doomed, but damned.

O where is this mysterious bourne,
By which our path is crossed ;
Beyond which, God himself hath sworn,
That he who goes is lost ?

How far may we go on in sin ?
How long will God forbear ?

Where does hope end? and where begin
The confines of despair?

An answer from the skies is sent:

Ye that from God depart!

While it is called to-day, repent!

And harden not your heart.

J. A.



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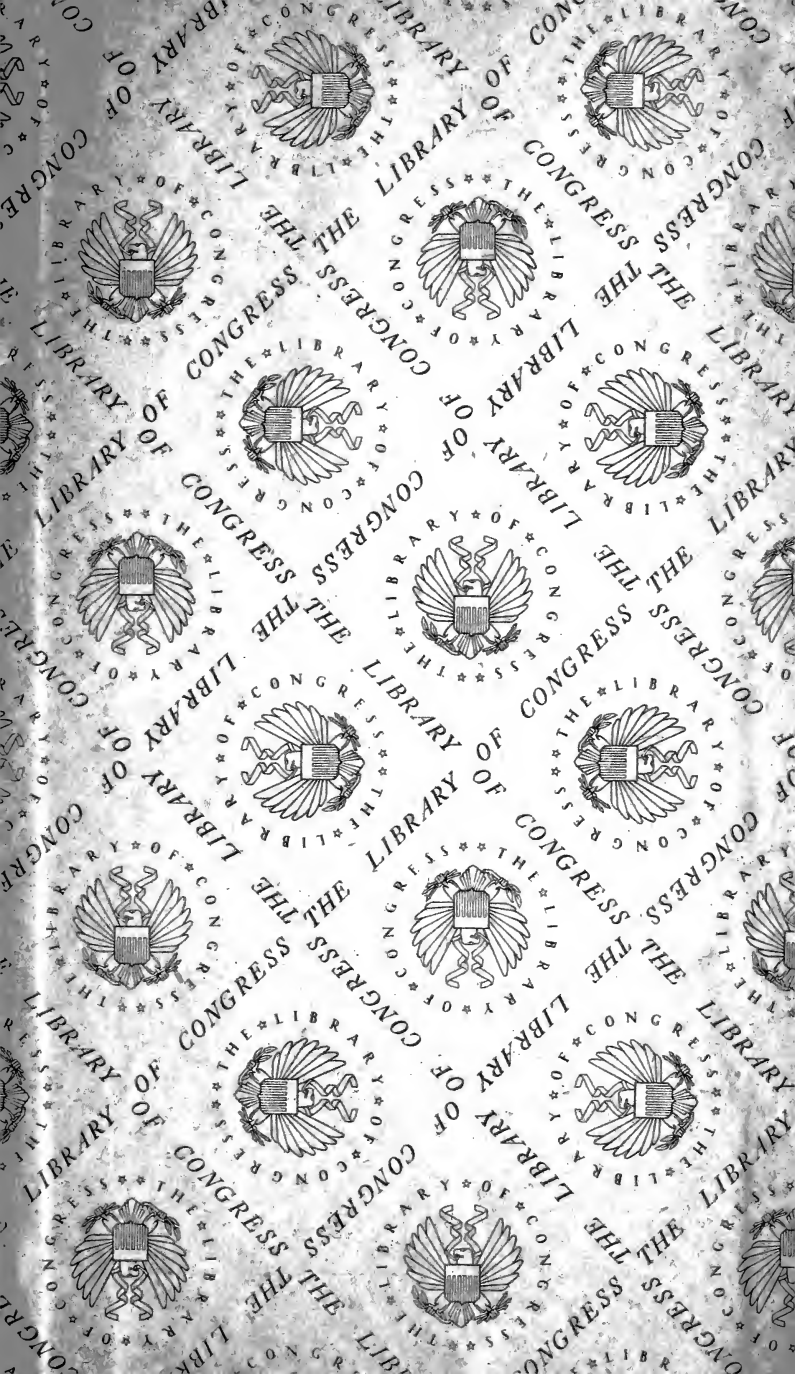




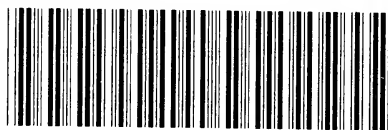
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